

Researchers based the survey instrument on the Higher Education Research Institute's (HERI) Life After College Survey (LAC), a survey of former undergraduates. The study builds on Astin and Vogelgsang's (2006) study of a national sample of alumni who participated in service learning experiences during college. Civic leadership, charitable giving, and overall political engagement were all identified as being more common among individuals who had participated in service-learning than among those who had not. Astin and Vogelgsang's sample could not control for different teaching styles, reflection strategies, service experiences, and conceptions of service-learning. This survey of Project FOCUS graduates controls for these variables.

The results of the Project FOCUS study found that after graduation, individuals who had participated in Project FOCUS were more likely to continue involvement with activities related to community and civic engagement. Participants' community and civic engagement was greater than non-participants' (statistically significant) for all categories of 'working with communities' and 'volunteer activities' as defined in the LAC survey. Participants also appeared to have a stronger affinity to their alma mater than non-participants as a result of the experience. Study results identify effects of student FOCUS participation on postgraduate civic attitudes and behaviors and contribute to broader scholarly understanding of service-learning's long-term impact.

References

Astin, A. W., Vogelgesang, L. J., Misa, K., Anderson, J., Denson, N., Jayakumar, U., Saenz, V., & Yamamura, E. (2006). *Understanding the effects of service-learning: A study of students and faculty*. Los Angeles, CA: University of California, Los Angeles.